United Nations E/2003/SR.50

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

26 September 2003

Original: English

Resumed substantive session of 2003

Provisional summary record of the 50th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 22 August 2003, at 11.40 a.m.

President: Mr. Rosenthal ..... (Guatemala)

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03-47764 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

Expression of sympathy in connection with the recent attack on the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq

1. **The President**, on behalf of all the members of the Council, expressed consternation at the recent attack on the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(h) Ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict (*continued*) (E/2003/L.48 and L.49)

2. **The President** drew attention to draft decision E/2003/L.48, entitled "Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi" and to the statement on the programme budget implications of the draft decision contained in document E/2003/L.49. He suggested that, in paragraph (d) of the draft decision, the words "subject to conditions in the field permitting it" should be replaced by the language used in paragraph 2 (d) of the statement of programme budget implications, namely, "taking into consideration the unique character and needs of the situation in Burundi".

3. *The draft decision, as orally revised, was adopted.*

4. **Mr. Nteturuye** (Burundi) said that his delegation was convinced that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group would further the efforts already being made to help Burundi emerge from the crisis of the past decade. Much of the population lived in extreme poverty owing to the effects of conflict and insecurity. While the situation on the ground might affect the capacity of the international community to render assistance, it was precisely when conditions were at their worst that international aid was most needed. Indeed, the delivery of economic assistance might well facilitate a political solution in Burundi. In that connection, there was cause for optimism. Significant progress had been made in the negotiations between his Government and the main rebel movements, and there was reason to hope that a settlement might be reached by the end of the month. However, the last rebel group must still be persuaded to sit down at the negotiating table. His delegation was grateful to the Council for its assistance and wished to urge all members to consider what further contributions they might make to assist Burundi's emergence from conflict.

5. **Mr. Raubenheimer** (South Africa) said that the Group's work could lead to a new constructive engagement in Burundi and contribute to real progress in that country. The Group should draw on the lessons learned from the experience of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau. The conditions in each country were unique, however, and he was pleased that that fact had been taken into account in the draft decision. It was important for the Council to make its contribution in Burundi at the earliest opportunity, and he believed that the time was now right. He trusted that the Group would receive support not only from the other members of the Council, but also from the wider membership of the United Nations. In that connection, the Permanent Representative of South Africa, who was to serve as Chairperson of the Group, looked forward to working with the President of the Council and the Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.

6. **The President** said that the Group had the potential not only to make a significant contribution in Burundi, but also to help set the parameters for the interaction between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council in countries that were making the transition from conflict to post-conflict situations.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.